

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
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R 221330Z FEB 78
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AMEMBASSY BONN
USINT HAVANA
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AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: IT, SO, IT
SUBJECT: ITALIAN COMMUNISTS SUPPORT SOVIET-CUBAN INTERVENTION
IN ETHIOPIA

SUMMARY. IN AN ARTICLE WRITTEN FOR THE PARTY'S WEEKLY THEORETICAL JOURNAL, A SENIOR ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PCI) FOREIGN AFFAIRS SPOKESMAN HAS CRITICIZED SOMALIA'S MILITARY ACTIONS AGAINST ETHIOPIA AND HAS SUPPORTED THE RIGHT OF THE SOVIETS AND THE CUBANS TO INTERVENE IN DEFENSE OF THE ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION. THE PCI HAS NOW COME DOWN SOLIDLY IN FAVOR OF THE ETHIOPIANS AND IN SO DOING HAS COME CLOSE TO LEGITIMIZING THE SO-CALLED BREZHNEV DOCTRINE.
END SUMMARY.

1. IN AN ARTICLE WRITTEN FOR THE FEBRUARY 17 ISSUE OF RINASCITA,
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THE PCI'S WEEKLY THEORETICAL JOURNAL, SECRETARIAT MEMBER AND SENIOR PARTY FOREIGN POLICY SPOKESMAN GIAN CARLO PAJETTA CLEARLY COMES DOWN ON THE ETHIOPIAN SIDE IN THE DISPUTE OVER THE OGADEN. THE FACT THAT THE PARTY DAILY L'UNITA SUMMARIZED PAJETTA'S ARTICLE ON ITS FRONT PAGE ON FEBRUARY 16 SUGGESTS THAT THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN IT REPRESENT OFFICIAL PARTY POSITION.

2. BASED ON RECENT CONTACTS WITH ETHIOPIANS, SOMALIS, AND ERITREANS, PAJETTA EXPRESSES THE PCI VIEW THAT THE WESTERN SOMALI LIBERATION FRONT ATTACK (SIC) ON THE OGADEN QUOTE OPENLY SUPPORTED BY THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT END QUOTE AND THE SOMALI BREAK OF RELATIONS WITH THE USSR ARE THE FRUIT OF AN ERROR OF VALUATION OF THE NATURE OF THE ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION AND OF THE POSSIBILITIES OF REACHING AN AGREEMENT WITH THE ETHIOPIANS. ACCORDING TO PAJETTA, THE ERROR WAS COMPOUNDED BY THE BELIEF THAT A SUDDEN ATTACK, A MILITARY VICTORY AND THE POSSIBILITY TO DESIGN NEW BORDERS MIGHT FLOW FROM A DISINTEGRATION OF THE ETHIOPIAN EMPIRE.

3. AGAINST THIS BACKDROP, PAJETTA WRITES THAT QUOTE THE SOVIET-CUBAN ASSISTANCE IS FROM A JURIDICAL POINT OF VIEW LEGITIMATE SINCE IT POINTS TO THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF ETHIOPIAN FRONTIERS, AND THIS HAS BEEN RECOGNIZED BY ALL THE WESTERN COUNTRIES. END QUOTE. PAJETTA GOES ON TO STATE THAT QUOTE THE SOVIET AID IS TIED TO A JUDGEMENT AND TO A CONCERN WHICH ARE NOT UNJUSTIFIED: WHAT WOULD IT HAVE MEANT TO HAVE A RETURN TO A TYPE OF NEOCOLONIALISM IN ETHIOPIA AGAINST WHICH NEITHER A SOCIALIST SOMALIA NOR AN ERITREAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT WOULD BE ABLE TO ACT. THE FALL OF AN ETHIOPIA WHICH TRIED TO FREE ITSELF FROM FEUDALISM AND NEOCOLONIALISM WOULD HAVE SIGNIFIED IN EVERY LIKELIHOOD THAT THE MOST ADVANCED FORCES WOULD HAVE BEEN ISOLATED AND OVERCOME EVEN IN SOMALIA AND ERITREA. END QUOTE.

4. COMMENT. AFTER WRESTLING WITH THE QUESTION OF THE HORN OF AFRICA
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WHERE IN THE PAST THEIR TIES HAVE BEEN CLOSEST WITH SOMALIA AND WITH CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF THE ERITREAN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS, THE PCI HAS FIRMLY COME DOWN ON THE SIDE OF THE ETHIOPIANS ON THE PREMISE THAT THEY HAVE BEEN SUBJECT TO A FOREIGN SUPPORTED INVASION OF THEIR NATIONAL TERRITORY. IT IS PERHAPS NOTEWORTHY THAT THIS DEVELOPMENT HAS TAKEN PLACE ONLY AFTER THE INJECTION OF MASSIVE AID INTO ETHIOPIA BY THE SOVIETS AND THE CUBANS. (PAJETTA HIMSELF HAD LED A STUDY MISSION TO ADDIS ABABA AND MOGADISCIO IN NOVEMBER WHICH RESULTED IN A TILTING TOWARD THE ETHIOPIAN SIDE DESPITE SOME APPARENT RESISTANCE WITHIN THE PCI LEADERSHIP.) AT THE SAME TIME, THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE PCI IS NOW MOTIVATED BY A CONVICTION THAT A TRUE SOCIAL REVOLUTION IS UNDERWAY IN ETHIOPIA THAT NEEDS TO BE SUPPORTED AND ASSISTED. (PAJETTA REPORTEDLY MADE THIS POINT TO FOREIGN MINISTER FORLANI WHEN BRIEFING HIM ON HIS NOVEMBER VISIT TO THE HORN.) RESPONDING TO AN AMERICAN JOURNALIST RECENTLY, PAJETTA BRUSHED ASIDE A QUESTION ABOUT THE DAILY STREET KILLINGS WHICH ARE TAKING PLACE IN ADDIS BY OBSERVING THAT QUOTE REVOLUTIONS ARE REVOLUTIONS END QUOTE.

5. ONE INTERESTING SIDELIGHT OF THE PAJETTA ARTICLE IS THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE PCI IS PREPARED TO ACCEPT IN CERTAIN CONDITIONS AND UNDER SOME CIRCUMSTANCES THE APPLICATION OF SOME

FORM OF THE SO-CALLED BREZHNEV DOCTRINE, AT LEAST OUTSIDE ITALY.
FOR IF WE READ PAJETTA CORRECTLY, HE IS ASSERTING THE COMPLETE
RIGHT OF THE SOVIETS, AND THEIR CUBAN ALLIES, TO ASSIST OTHER
COUNTRIES IN DEFENDING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THEIR REVOLUTIONS.
THE PCI ATTITUDE TOWARD FOREIGN ASSISTANCE, I.E. FRENCH AND
MOROCCAN, WAS SUBSTANTIALLY DIFFERENT IN THE CASE OF THE INVASION
OF ZAIRE'S SHUBA PROVINCE BY FORCES HAVING AT LEAST LOGISTICAL
SUPPORT FROM THE ANGOLAN AUTHORITIES. THE SEEMING CONTRADICTIONS
IN THE PCI ARE NOT GOING UNNOTICED BY AT LEAST SEVERAL OF ITALY'S
FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMENTATORS. GARDNER

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